

A
SERMON
Preach'd before the *69th*
QUEEN,
AT
WINDSOR,

September 23. 1705.
K-

By *GEO. ROTSE*, D. D. Dean of *Bristol*,
Provost of *Oriel College* in *Oxon.*
And Chaplain in Ordinary to Her MAJESTY.

Publis'd by Her MAJESTY's Especial Command.

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Church-yard, LONDON. 1705.

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Prov. xvi. vers. 32.

*He that is slow to anger is better
than the mighty; and he that
ruleth his spirit, than he that
taketh a city.*

IF we look back upon the Account of
former Ages, it may easily be observ'd,
That the greatest Glory has generally at-
tended the greatest Conquests, and those
that have been most fortunate in taking Cities,
and enlarging Empires, are the most renown'd
and

and celebrated in the Records of Time. But *Solomon* here, tho' a Great Prince, as well as an Inspir'd Writer, had quite other Thoughts upon this Subject; for, instead of giving the Glory to Mighty Men, or awarding the Prize of Honour to them, he raises the poor, meek, dispassionate Man above all the great Heroes, and Conquerors in the World: and he represents the true Art of *Ruling our Spirits*, as infinitely superior to all the Arts of human Policy, to all the Exploits of War; for,

He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city.

What *Solomon* intends here is very plain and obvious, and may easily be resolv'd into this one Proposition: viz.

That the private Rule, or Government over our Passions is far more honourable than any other Rule or Dominion whatever. Now this Expression of *Ruling our Spirits* may very well extend to all the Passions; but this single Passion of *Anger* being particularly mention'd in my Text, I shall therefore shew a more particular regard to it throughout this Discourse.

The Words containing only one single Proposition, all that concerns me at present is, first, to establish the Truth of *Solomon's* Assertion; and then, in the next place, by way of Con-

Conclusion, to recommend this Advice of being *slow to anger*, and of *ruling our spirits*.

And the great Excellency of this, above all other Rule and Dominion, will appear very plain from these following Propositions.

First, Because it carries us to a nearer Resemblance of the Divine Nature, than any external Power and Dominion whatever.

Secondly, As it gives us a Reputation of greater Wisdom and Understanding.

Thirdly, As it bespeaks more true Courage and Bravery than any other Conquest, in taking Cities and subduing Kingdoms.

Fourthly, As it affords us the truest Freedom and Liberty.

Fifthly and Lastly, As it gives us more Ease and Quiet.

And *First* of all, This carries us to a nearer Resemblance of the Divine Nature, than any other Power, or Authority whatever.

It has been the Perswasion of some of our late Writers, that the Glorious Image of God, first stamp'd upon human Nature, was little or nothing else, but that external Power and Dominion, which was first bestow'd on Man, over the rest of the Creatures. Now were these Men in the right, that the main Resemblance

of the Divine Nature was founded upon a bare Likeness of Sovereignty and Power, I should think it then a very hard Task to maintain, that *He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty.*

But to put this Matter in a true Light, Tho' Dominion and Power be, no doubt, a faint Image and Resemblance of GOD, yet to place all our Likeness in that one Perfection is equally as absurd as to affirm, That one single Feature and Lineament of a Man's Face is the entire Image and Copy of his Countenance. To be short, The great Excellency of our Natures, or our Likeness and Conformity to God does not consist in any one single Perfection, but requires a great Variety to compleat it. But as those are the noblest Perfections, that do most improve and better the Temper of our Minds, so they carry the most illustrious Reflexion of the Divine Image.

And therefore, since the right Temper of our Minds does more especially depend upon the Regularity of our Passions, it easily follows, that a just Government and Rule over these is a much greater Perfection than Might and Power: for Might and Power, however they may be of use to better other Men's Tempers, yet they signify nothing as to the Improvement of our own. No Man was ever the better for ha-

having Power, but Thousands have been the worse for it.

And can we imagin then, that this was all the Dignity of the Divine Image to be vested only with the Rule and Power over others, and and at the same time to be left to the Struggle of our own Passions without any Rule or Authority over them? That magnificent Expression which *Moses* gives us in describing the Dignity of our first Creation, That *we were made in the image of God, and after his likeness*, that Expression, I say, may very well imply a more extensive Excellency than these Men would have it. The Apostle, I am sure, in describing the new Creation, or the new Nature, gives us a better Account of this Matter; namely, That to be restored to the Divine Image is to be renew'd *in the spirit of our minds*, or, which is the same thing, to be inwardly chang'd in the Temper of our Minds, and consequently to be deliver'd from the Powers of Lust and Passion.

This is the great Glory of God himself, that as his eternal Mind is always acted by eternal Reason without Passion and Resentment; so the most lively Features of that Divine Image, do shine out brightest in the same Temper of our Minds, and in an universal Rule over all our Passions. By the Account he has given us in his

his own Writings, 'tis plain, that as God Almighty is infinitely pleas'd with all his Perfections, so he more particularly delights and glories in this, That he is *slow to anger, and long-suffering*.

But, *Secondly*, to Rule our own Spirits is a greater Instance of human Wisdom, than any other Rule or Command whatever; and therefore in this respect too, *he that is slow to anger is better than the mighty*. If we examine the Stile and Language of Solomon, not only in this, but in many other places, 'tis an obvious Remark, That, as on one side, he makes no difference betwixt a hasty Spirit and a Fool, so he always represents these two as inseparably link'd together, a Man of Temper, and a Man of Understanding: Thus, Chapt. 14th. *He that is slow to anger is of great understanding, but a hasty spirit exalteth folly*. Chapt. 17th. *A man of understanding is of an excellent spirit*. Chapt. 19th. *The discretion of a man deferreth his anger*. But not to multiply Authorities in a plain Matter, in the Reason of Things 'tis easily accountable, that the Art of Ruling and Governing our Passions is infinitely preferable to all the Rule and Power of the Mighty, I mean upon the account of Wisdom and Understanding.

But

But not to talk of Understanding in general, that which I intend here is that special Branch and Exercise of it, which goes by the Name of Prudence and Discretion; and in this sense too, to exercise Rule over one single Passion is a greater Argument of human Wisdom, than to Conquer and Govern over all the World.

For the business of Prudence, as 'tis a Moral Vertue, and, in its proper sense, does not relate to any outward Acts of exercising Rule and Authority over others, but as the Philosopher observes, 'tis wholly employ'd about the private Conduct, and Government over our selves. And, since the Conduct of a Man's Life does, in a great measure, depend upon the Government of his Passions, therefore the right Notion of human Prudence does naturally imply the Ruling and Governing our own Spirits.

To exercise Rule and Power over others is more an Art and Policy, than a Moral Vertue; and there is as much difference betwixt this, and true Moral Prudence, as betwixt the Art of a Pilot in steering of his Ship, and the Conduct of a wise Man in steering his Course of Life. To speak truly, there is nothing that deserves the Name of Prudence, but what relates to a Man's self, and the private Oeconomy within himself. This is the only proper and peculiar Province of the Man, where he that

Go-

Governs best is the Wilest Man, and he that has the most absolute Rule is the most absolute Prince.

'Tis certain, that every Man's self is of nearer and closer Concern to himself, than all the World; and therefore to exercise Rule over our selves is a greater Instance of human Prudence, than to extend our Government over the World: *If thou wilt be wise, says Solomon, thou wilt be wise for thy self.* A wise Man is the greatest Self-lover, in a true sense, and Prudence, as well as Charity, does begin at Home. And therefore, the right exercise of Discretion and Prudence does not consist at all in the Art of taking Cities, and subduing Kingdoms, but in securing our Dominion at Home, and in the Command over our Selves.

Were all Mankind thus Wise for themselves, there would be no such great use of Might, and Power, nor any such want of political Rule and Authority: for one main end of Power and Authority was to govern those, that could not govern themselves. Those that talk to you of an imaginary State of Nature, will at the same time tell you too, that external Rule and Authority was not all design'd for the original State of Man, but occasionally introduc'd by the Extravagance of Men's Passions; *At postquam exui aequalitas, &c.*

pro-

provenire dominationes, says Tacitus. Annal. 3.

This, I confess, is no true Account of Things, but the Notion however is so far right, that had all Men continued to *rule their own spirits*, as there had been no such great use of Power and Dominion; so neither had there been any such thing in the World, as the mistaken Glory of conquering Cities, and enlarging Kingdoms.

But the Business of governing our Lusts and Passions, as 'tis the most glorious Instance of human Wisdom, so 'tis of everlasting Use, not only to the Conduct of private Men, but likewise to the Government and Authority of the Mighty.

For the publick Office of exercising Rule and Authority over others does, in a great measure, depend upon the private Discretion of governing our selves. I take it for granted, that no Man can be fitted to Command over others, that never made the Experiment of Governing himself: for the very same Passions, that usually disturb a Man in his private Capacity will equally unfit him for the publick Management. Passion and Revenge were never yet thought Good Privy-Counsellors to Princes; and, whenever you find these Rule at Home, they will as certainly Govern and Domineer Abroad; and therefore this Art of *quieting our Spirits*, as 'tis the noblest Piece of Wisdom in

Relation to our selves, so 'tis of no less Advantage in our Government over others.

But, *Thirdly*, This office of Ruling and Managing our Tempers does shew more true Bravery and Greatness of Mind, than the advancing the greatest Conquest and Dominion over others.

This wise Men have always taught, and great Men have always practiced: and in the Reason of Things 'tis very plain, that as the main Strength and Force of a reasonable Creature does really consist in the free Exercise of his Reason, so this is the true Fortitude and Bravery of the mind to quell those Passions, that are Enemies to our Reason. A fierce ungovernable Temper does only shew the Greatness of a Man's Passion, not that of his Mind: for, a Mind that can't govern it self, as 'tis not in its own Power, so there needs no other Argument of its Weakness. There is no such thing in the World as Greatness without Power; for the Gallantry of the Mind does as much require a Moral Power, as the Greatness of a Monarch requires a Civil Power; and therefore we may as well say, A great Prince without Power and Authority, as a great Mind without any Authority and Rule over it self.

For

For the Greatness of a Man's Mind does as much consist in the Command over its Passions, as that of a Prince in the Command over his Subjects. A Mind that can't conquer and subdue these, can with no more Propriety be call'd Generous and Great, than an Army can be said to be Stout and Valiant, that yields to the first Attack and Appearance of the Enemy. And if this be the right Notion of the true Greatness of Mind, what is all the Courage of Conquering others, compar'd to the true Bravery of keeping Possession of our selves? Shall the Triumphs of a mere brutish external Force, be thought any wise equal to the Conquests of human Reason?

This is a very odd account of a Man's Bravery and Valour, to conquer others and to be rob'd of himself, to act the Emperor and to lose the Man, to enslave our Enemies and to be infinitely more a Slave than the Conquer'd themselves; and yet this generally is the Case of the greatest Conquerors, they shew a mistaken Courage in subduing others, and at the same time a greater Cowardise in losing themselves. All their mighty Actions, as they usually spring from Heat and Ambition, and from Rage and Fury, so they as much discover the Weakness of their Minds, as the Strength of their Forces.

That one single Vertue we read of in the Story of *Scipio*, I mean his Temper and Moderation in the Treatment of his Captives, has rais'd him to a brighter Character in the Esteem of Mankind, than all the Pomp and Splendor of his most celebrated Conquest. Take all your best *Roman* Authors, that have wrote any thing of the Gallantry and Courage of *Julius Cæsar*, and after all, that single Oration in *Tully*, that describes the Greatness of his Clemency and Mildness, does infinitely more contribute to the Glory of his Memory, than all the united Records of his Battles and Engagements. So great is the Bravery of conquering one single Passion, it leaves always an honourable Impression of a Great Mind, it surmounts the very Infamy and Scandal of unjust Undertakings, it turns the Hearts of our Enemies, and overcomes the Resentments of their own Misfortunes.

But, *Fourthly*, this Art of Governing and Ruling our Spirits does give us the Possession of a more noble Liberty, than the highest Advance of Might and Power.

Was that the right Notion of human Liberty, that 'tis an entire Exemption from the Will of any Superior, I confess then that the Advantage of Liberty would always lie on the side of
Might

Might and Power: for then, as no one could be a Slave that is above Law, so no one could be free that lives under it: But this account of Liberty, as 'tis false in it's self, so 'tis well for the World that 'tis not true.

I shall not spend time about the several Notions of the Word, but by Liberty, in short, I mean that inward Freedom and Vigour of the Mind, that consists in the absolute Command over its own Acts, or, which is the same thing, in the free and undisturb'd Exercise of its Powers: for a Mind that maintains its own Authority, as 'twill act incontrollably in the Execution of its own Orders, so consequently it will have the greatest Freedom from Slavery and Usurpation.

And as this naturally supposes the free Exercise of our Reason, so it equally implies the Ruling our Spirits, and the Subjection of our Passions. A Mind that is govern'd by Passion and Resentment as it must be disturb'd in the Exercise of its own Reason, so it must proportionably suffer a Diminution of its Freedom. To speak truly, the Liberty of the Mind, as it is a rational Freedom, so it is always founded, as well as supported, upon Reason.

And pursuantly to this you will always find, that where there is the most perfect Reason, there is the most perfect Liberty, and on the other

other side, where there is no Reason, there's no such thing as Freedom; and thus it likewise happens in the several States of Mankind, that the Liberty of Mens Minds is either enlarg'd, or straiten'd, in Proportion to the free Use and Exercise of their Reason.

Thus GOD and Angels, as they are the most rational Beings, so they are most free too; because as they are never restrain'd in the right Exercise of their Reason, so neither are they ever barr'd from the Enjoyment of their Liberty: but now on the other side, we don't allow any true Freedom to Fools and Children, because having no Use of Reason themselves, they are always placed under the Reason and Will of other Men.

'Tis usually thought indeed, that those have the best Pretensions to Liberty, that are left absolutely at large, and no wise confin'd to the Commands of Reason: But this is not the Language of human Reason, but of human Passions; and our Passions, like other Usurpers, do always pretend and cry up Liberty, only to invade and destroy it.

But can any one imagine, that a Prince, who is controll'd by a forrein Power, is equally free, as he that acts by a wise Council of his own Choice, and by Laws of his own making? And the Case is much the same here: for if Reason be

be the sovereign Power of a Man, then as the Liberty of our Reason can never be preserv'd without the Maintenance of its Authority, so it must as certainly be destroy'd, whenever 'tis made subject to the Rule of its Passions; and therefore all the Might and Power in the World can never instate Men in this Freedom, unless the Authority of their Reason be at the same time preserv'd, as well as that of the Sword.

In short, this is the only glorious Liberty, which the best of Conquerors cannot give, nor the worst invade. But it will be urg'd perhaps, that Might and Power must have the largest Freedom, because there is no slavish Confinement to any Rules and Orders.

But I desire to know, where is there any such thing as human Liberty, without the Observance of Rules and Laws: Those that tell you of the perfect Freedom of a State of Nature will at the same time allow, that 'tis confined and subjected to the Laws of Nature; and 'tis the very same Case under human Governments; that is, our Civil Liberties are so far from being lessen'd by Rules and Orders, that they are always supported by the Civil Laws. And this I might easily shew in other Instances, that where there are no Laws, there is no Liberty: but I come now to the last thing to be consider'd, namely, To shew,

Fifth.

Fifthly, The great Advantage of Ruling our Spirits, in respect of that Peace and Quiet which naturally it brings with it, a Peace which the World can't give, nor the Powers of the World disturb.

Now this is a Subject so very plain, that I can't well go about to talk of it; for to tell you that our Passions do naturally break our Repose and Quiet, is no more than if I should say, that Heats and Feavers do naturally disturb our Rest, and that 'tis much more for a Man's Ease to be rid of a Distemper than to labour under it: And who is there in the World, that would require any Proof or Confirmation of this?

And yet as plain as this Advantage is, it seems to have but little or no place in Men's Thoughts, and less Influence upon their Practice, and therefore as long as there are Men, that won't discern their plain common Interest, so long it will be needful to put them in mind of these plain common Subjects.

And here, in general, it must be allow'd, there is some Trouble and Difficulty in conquering a Passion; but there is infinitely greater in being a Slave to it. Let a Man be in a Fit of Wrath and Anger, he may as sensibly feel the Uneasiness of it, as of any other Fit, whether of Gout or Stone.

And

And the great Mischief here is this, that when a Man can't Rule his own Spirit, then *the spirit of a Man can't rule his infirmity*, for *an unruly spirit who can bear?* But now on the other side as to the Pains and Evils of this Life, if a Man has but learnt the Art of Governing his Passions, this naturally abates the Force of his Sufferings, tho' it can't take away all the Sense and Sting of them.

And indeed this is the great Peace and Comfort of Ruling our Spirits, that whether we are concern'd in bearing the Evils, or enjoying the good Things of this World, we find a mighty difference in Point of Ease and Quiet betwixt the Conduct of our Reason, and the Mis-government of our Passions. In bearing the Evils of this Life 'tis plain, that we have much less Trouble when our Reason Governs, than when we are Fretted by our Passions. I shall only Instance in this one Passion of Anger here mention'd in my Text. 'Tis well known the main Spring of this Passion is an Opinion of our being Slighted and Despised, or a Fancy of some Indignity that is Offer'd to us: Now this Fancy and Opinion, just like Jealousy, is always Tormenting, and almost Infinite in Extent, and therefore the Plagues that come from it must be Infinite too.

For there is no end of those Evils, that are only Evils in Opinion, unless they are restrain'd and limited by Reason. Those that represent all natural Evils, as only Evils of Fancy and Opinion, do seem to have no right Notion of human Nature; but those, who ascribe no Evils to the Power of Fancy, seem to have no right Knowledge of themselves. Every angry passionate Man may easily feel what Plagues he creates to himself only upon the Opinion of an Affront.

For such a one is not only disturbed at real Injuries, but every supposed imaginary Slight, every groundless and trifling Accident, shall soon be improved into a fresh Occasion of Trouble and Disquiet. 'Tis Infinite to recount how many thousand Things may Daily Provoke and Disquiet a Man, if he once gives himself up to Fancy and Opinion. If a Word be dropt Unadvisedly, if it may be Interpreted in another Sense, if you do not Think and Believe just as he does, if you are not Angry at all those with whom he is Angry, or if you keep Company and Correspondence with any one of another Party, if you be wanting in any little Point of Ceremony, if you don't pay as much Honour as he thinks due to him, if you don't humour him in every Request, In short, if you don't fall in, like an exact
Tally,

Tally, and conform in every Thing to his Pattern and Direction, These and a Thousand other groundless Resentments are the constant Plagues that disturb the Repose of a passionate Man.

But now on the other side, did we live under the Rule and Government of our Reason, this as it would always proportion our Resentments to the Nature of the Affront, so it would cut off the main Occasion of all these Disquiets, it would cure us of the Suspicion of imaginary Sights, and lessen our Concern at those that are real.

In short, our Reason would tell us, that Contumelies and Affronts are no such great Evils, as to counterballance the Repose of a quiet Mind, that the great Sting of Contempt is to be Conscious of deserving it, and that as it seldom ever comes from wise Men, so 'tis always to be despised when it comes from Fools.

By this Instance I have given you of this Passion of Anger, you may easily conclude as to all the rest, how much it makes for the Ease and Quiet of our Minds, to keep them within the Bounds of Reason and Discretion: But I need not spend Time in dilating upon this, I come now, in the last place, by way of Conclusion to enforce this Advice, recommended in my Text, of being *slow to anger*, and *of ruling, our spirits*.

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And here we must needs be sensible, not only of the great Excellency, but of the great Obligation likewise to the Practice of this Duty: for 'tis well known, that this was one main Scope and Design of all the Ancient Morals, as well as of the Christian Institution, to teach us this important Lecture of quieting our Passions, and particularly of stilling the Rage and Fury of an angry Spirit.

When all is said, there is nothing that can recommend the Christian Religion to any serious considering Person more than this, that 'tis most fitted, and accommodated, for the sweetening Men's Tempers, and for taking off the Edge and Keenness of their Spirits.

And its Fitness for that End does appear from hence, that it has not only furnish'd us with the most refin'd Rules for our Direction in this Matter, but it has render'd them practicable too by the Sufficiency of that Grace it offers, and enforc'd that Practice by the Severity of its Sanctions; for *Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment.*

I need not mention in particular, what a considerable place this takes up in the Gospel of our Saviour, but thus much in short may be affirm'd, that this one Doctrin of *Ruling our Spirits* is so essential to the very Being and Life of

of Christianity, that to talk of being a good Christian without the Practice of this, is equally as absurd, as to set up a Religion without Morality, or Grace without Vertue.

And therefore as we would vindicate our Pretensions to such an honourable Title, it will concern us all to shew the true Spirit of Christianity in the Sweetness of our Tempers, and in the Gentleness of our Spirits. To speak freely and to do Justice to the Subject that lies before me, there is one great Miscarriage about this Duty of my Text, that reflects upon the Honour as well as the Interest of Religion, and that is in the Case of a mistaken Zeal: Religion, no doubt, where-ever it is sincere, will naturally excite a *Fervency of Spirit*, as well in the Practice as in the Defence of it; and 'tis impossible I think, in a Matter of such Moment and Consequence to the Souls of Men, that any one should sit down lukewarm and indifferent, that has any such thing as a tolerable Sense of it.

But then 'tis very unfortunate, that Men won't distinguish betwixt the gentle Motions of a well-temper'd Zeal, and the extravagant Fits of Rage and Madness: Unfortunate, that Wrath and Malice, that ill Nature and ill Manners should ever be shelter'd under such a religious Covert. This is to consecrate our
 Passions.

Passions as the *Pope* does Swords, for holy Wars, and holy Executions, and under the specious Pretensions of converting Enemies, to shew the most unchristian Temper in worrying and destroying them.

We are told indeed by the Schoolmen and others, that the right Notion of Zeal does consist in this, *viz.* That 'tis the Height and Intension of our Affections towards God; but never heard, that 'twas the Vehemence, and Intension of our Passions against one another; I hope the Love of our Brethren may not only be consistent with the Love of God, but likewise be a distinguishing Mark and Expression of it.

St. *John*, I am sure, gives us this account of the Matter; that the more our Affections are heighten'd and kindled for the Glory of God, the more kindly affectionate we shall be one to another: God be thank'd that the Spirit of our Church is the Spirit of Christianity; but if any one should be so unfortunate, as to mistake Wrath and Malice for the Spirit of our Church, or to miscall a Zeal for Preferment a Zeal for God's Glory, I think he is much better qualify'd for a *Scotch* Presbytery, or a *Romish* Inquisition, than for the Church of *England*.

That remarkable Rebuke which our Saviour gave to his Disciples, when they furiously call'd

for







